

**KANDIYOHI COUNTY AND CITY OF WILLMAR ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT COMMISSION (EDC)
AGRICULTURE AND RENEWABLE ENERGY DEVELOPMENT (Ag) COMMITTEE MEETING**

MINUTES

July 15, 2021

Via Zoom Video Conference

Present: Kevin Halvorson, Larry Konsterlie, Dustin Kotrba, Keith Poier and Dan Tepfer

Absent: Rollie Boll, Kim Larson and Dan Lippert

Excused: Michelle Marotzke

Guest: Carolyn Lange, West Central Tribune

Staff: Sarah Swedburg, Business Development Manager

Secretarial: Diane Beck, Legal & Administrative Assistants, Inc.

Chairperson Kevin Halvorson called the meeting to order at approximately 7:35 a.m. noting a quorum was not present.

AGENDA—Removed from the Agenda under New Business was the Industrial Hemp Flyer and removal of Nate Hultgren from the Industrial Hemp Exploratory Subcommittee. Added to the Agenda was removal of Michelle Marotzke from the committee and Farmfest.

NEW BUSINESS

Updated Agriculture Flyer. Sarah Swedburg showed the updated Agriculture flyer and reviewed the revisions (see attached) stating the statistics will also be updated. Swedburg commented it is important to promote agriculture in Kandiyohi County and suggested adding information on shrimp farming and industrial hemp. Keith Poier suggested adding information on Bushmills Ethanol. Additional discussion was held regarding content. Swedburg recently attended a site selector conference and learned it is important to include area businesses in a flyer to attract site selectors. Discussion was held on the format, i.e., one-page versus a trifold. Those present felt both formats should be printed—a trifold for conferences and a one-page for electronic purposes.

Removal of Michelle Marotzke from the Committee. Swedburg reported Marotzke currently serves on the EDC's Broadband and Advanced Technology Committee as well as this committee. Marotzke is currently employed with Mid-Minnesota Development Commission (MMDC) and EDC staff feel her present position would be best suited for the EDC's Finance Committee, replacing her predecessor Les Nelson. Marotzke is willing to change. Swedburg suggested adding others to this committee and proposed the following: Justice Walker of MMDC, Chris Radel of Willmar Municipal

Utilities and David Nelson, a local farmer. A discussion was held on the number of members for this committee and the number who regularly attend. Swedburg suggested voting on today's action items and she will clarify the correct number needed for a quorum and notify the members.

IT WAS MOVED BY Dan Tepfer, SECONDED BY Keith Poier, to accept with regrets the resignation of Michelle Marotzke from the Kandiyohi County and City of Willmar Economic Development Commission's Agriculture and Renewable Energy Committee. MOTION CARRIED.

AGENDA—

IT WAS MOVED BY Dustin Kotrba, SECONDED BY Larry Konsterlie, to approve the Agenda as emailed. MOTION CARRIED.

MINUTES—

IT WAS MOVED BY Keith Poier, SECONDED BY Dan Tepfer, to approve the minutes of the June 17, 2021 meeting as emailed. MOTION CARRIED.

NEW BUSINESS CONTINUED—

Industrial Hemp Flyer. Tabled until the next meeting.

Removal of Nate Hultgren from the Industrial Hemp Exploratory Subcommittee. Tabled until the next meeting.

REPORTS

Industrial Hemp Exploratory Subcommittee. Poier shared information from a tour of Hemponix, a hemp seed plant west of New London. Subcommittee members learned Hemponix uses proprietary aeroponic agronomics to produce hemp seeds for CBG (cannabigerol) oil and also conducts testing on the seed. The owner is ready to begin selling CBG seeds. Poier shared new regulations for THC (tetrahydrocannabinol) levels; testing procedures of industrial hemp have increased and the testing timeframe has changed. Dan Tepfer inquired about the market for industrial hemp. Poier shared farmers are needed to grow plants, but incentives are needed to support the development of production facilities.

Farmfest. Swedburg announced the 2021 Farmfest will be held August 3-5 and asked if the EDC should have a booth in 2022. Tepfer shared he attends Farmfest representing Touchstone Energy Cooperative and feels it would be a good idea for the EDC to have a booth next year. A discussion was held regarding staffing for a booth. Swedburg requested committee members who are interested in attending 2021 Farmfest to contact her as the EDC will cover admission tickets and reimburse for mileage. Swedburg shared the EDC will be hiring a marketing person in the near future.

Partners in Ag Innovation Conference. Dustin Kotrba reported the conference will be held July 29th. The committee is finalizing the sessions, trivia questions and prizes. The budget is on track with \$24,000. Kotrba visited with Carolyn Lange of the *West Central Tribune*, who will write an article on the conference to be published next week. Registration includes in-person or remote attendance. Currently, 30 are registered for in-person and 22 are registered for remote attendance. Previously, 35 registered prior to the change to a hybrid conference. Sara Mikolich, event planner, is following up with those registrants.

AG/RENEWABLE ENERGY COMMUNITY EVENTS/PROJECTS. Tepfer asked Swedburg for an update on the site selector conference she attended. Swedburg shared the national Consultants Forum Workshop was held July 12-14 in Detroit, Michigan and sponsored by AreaDevelopment. Approximately 20 site selectors attended along with 45 Economic Development Professional attendees, mostly from the Midwest and East Coast area; she was the only attendee from Minnesota. With the small attendance she was able to network, speak to the site selectors and promote the Willmar area. She was impressed with the caliber of the workshops. Availability of labor was noted as the most important thing site selectors look for in a community along with efforts to meet our local business community's workforce needs.

ADJOURNMENT—

IT WAS MOVED BY Dan Tepfer, SECONDED BY Dustin Kotrba, to adjourn the meeting.

The meeting was adjourned at approximately 8:34 a.m.

NEXT MEETING—The next meeting is 7:30 a.m., August 19, 2021, in the EDC Board Room and via Zoom video conference.